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JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

'What put us on the map'

1988 WINTER OLYMPICS

**Calgary torch
expected to
fetch more
than \$50,000**



**Lucie
Edwardson**
Metro | Calgary

A Boston-based company is expecting bids of more than \$50,000 when it puts a Calgary Olympic icon on the auction block later this month.

The fact a torch from the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics could fetch such an amount is a testament to the lasting legacy, according to WinSport.

Dale Oviatt, director of communications for WinSport, said each time a torch from the 1988 Games is in the spotlight, it highlights the success Calgary had as Olympic host.

"It reminds another generation of what did happen in Calgary and what put us on the map 28 years ago," he said.

Oviatt said unlike many Olympic cities, who appear to extinguish along with their Olympic flame, Calgary has managed to continue to use its Olympic facilities and produce world-re-

nowned training facilities.

The torch, one of approximately 150 from the 1988 Calgary Olympics, has become increasingly hard to come by as the years go on, according to Oviatt, with each valued in the tens of thousands.

"One sold a couple of years ago for about \$30,000, so the Boston Auction company estimates it could fetch anywhere between 50-60 thousand," he said.

The torch, designed to resemble the Calgary Tower, is composed of aluminum with a maple handle bearing pictograms of 10 Winter Olympic sports.

The torch will be auctioned off by Boston-based RR Auction between Jan. 14 and 21.

There are currently two 1988 Olympic torches with permanent homes in Calgary. One lives at the WinSport executive offices and the other is just across the street at Canada's Sports Hall of Fame.

**One of the
approximately
150 torches that
were made for
the 1988 Calgary
Winter Olympics.**

AARON CHATHA/METRO





A group called Ready to Engage is opposed to the planned Southwest bus rapid transit project, which would include adding two bus-only lanes to a section of 14 Street SW. JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

Checker Cabs not with group opposing BRT

TRANSPORTATION

Owner says his involvement is only on a personal level



Brodie Thomas
Metro | Calgary

The owner of Checker Cabs said his company has absolutely nothing to do with a group of con-

cerned Calgary citizens opposed to a southwest transit project.

Kurt Enders was responding to questions from people on Twitter who noted the registrant for the Ready to Engage group's website was Checker Cabs Ltd.

Paul Doherty is a blogger and Twitter user who first looked up the information through a domain search. He then tweeted out a screenshot of what he found.

He said he didn't do anything more with the information, until Wednesday afternoon when he sent a tweet to Checker Cabs,

asking if they were involved with the group. Enders confirmed to Metro he's a member of Ready to Engage, but is simply a concerned citizen who lives in the area.

"It's a personal thing. It has nothing to do with my company," said Enders.

When the group started meeting, he volunteered to help set up the website and to host it.

He said the group is no different than any other that comes together for a common cause.

"I've got staff members being dragged through the mud and my

company being dragged through the mud when they've got no involvement," he said.

Alan Hallman has been acting as media liaison for Ready to Engage. He said in a way, he's glad the issue has blown up on Twitter, because the media is finally paying attention to the group.

He bristles at the idea that the cab industry is somehow behind the group.

"We are affected land owners that want a say in this is development. We want a say because our children play in those yards."

RIDE SHARING

Will insurance coverage provide reassurance when using Uber?

On Wednesday, insurance company Aviva Canada announced it plans to protect UberX drivers when they're behind the wheel working. The coverage will be available in Ontario, and the company said it's working to expand it across Canada. JEREMY SIMES/FOR METRO



If they have some kind of insurance company then they have some kind of liability to go along with it.

Chealsey Fair, 28, optician



If something happens and I lose my leg — and my work liability insurance is one year — and after that I'm on my own, then that's not good.

Ken Houssin, 42, sales



Let's be honest: Who wants to get into a taxi with someone who doesn't have a licence?

Leo Gabriel, 23, sales



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IN BRIEF

TransCanada launches lawsuit over Keystone XL

TransCanada launched a double-barrelled legal salvo Wednesday against the U.S. government over its rejection of the company's proposed Keystone XL pipeline.

The company said it intends to file a claim under Chapter 11 of the North American Free Trade Agreement in response to the decision, which it called arbitrary and unjustified.

The Calgary-based firm said it will be looking to recover US\$15 billion in costs and damages as a result of what it says is a breach of NAFTA obligations.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Man in hospital after escaping house fire

A man was taken to hospital Wednesday afternoon after escaping a house fire. Calgary EMS responded to the call in the 0-100 block of Simcrest Manor SW around 2:30 p.m.

Paramedics assessed three adults at the scene. Two of the three declined treatment but the third man in his early 20s was suffering from smoke inhalation and mild carbon monoxide exposure.

Paramedics transported him to Foothills Hospital in serious, but otherwise stable and non-life threatening condition.

EMS remained on standby at the scene, however there were no reports of injury to any first responders who attended.

METRO



Calgary Lab Services is looking to reduce wait times, and getting people to book appointments may be part of the solution.

JEREMY SIMES/FOR METRO

Calgary Lab Services sees solution online

HEALTH CARE

Patients likely seen faster with appointments: Spokesperson



Jeremy Simes
For Metro | Calgary

Calgary Lab Services (CLS) thinks getting more people to make appointments — instead of being walk-in clients — could be part of a solution to reduce wait times.

In November, CLS approached Alberta Health Services for feedback on a majority appointment system with limited walk-in slots.

Demand has been increasing

for the blood and specimen collection sites in the Calgary metro region, prompting CLS to look for solutions, according to Cindy Chetley with CLS.

Patients who book appointments online or over the phone for lab tests are essentially seen immediately when they walk in. Those who walk in without an appointment have to wait until a slot is available.

On average, 58 per cent of walk-ins are waiting more than 20 minutes for a lab test, Chetley said.

However, she said one centre in Chestermere — which operates on an appointments-only basis — has 95 per cent of its patients looked at within 20 minutes.

The business at the Chestermere site compared to others isn't known, she added.

Chetley said CLS has been speaking with patients and physician groups to gather their opinions and concerns as part of an engagement initiative. The findings will be used to develop a wait times strategy, once they're finalized in the spring.

Part of that process was asking the patient if they booked an appointment over the phone or online.

"We want patients to be happy," she said. "We know walk-ins are waiting longer than people who are booking appointments."

When CLS asked AHS for feedback regarding its majority appointment system, Francesca Simon — councillor with the

Prairie Mountain Health Advisory Council — asked how the potential system would affect marginalized populations who regularly walk-in, according to AHS meeting minutes.

CLS representatives replied it was working with those patients to find solutions for booking appointments online.

Council recommended CLS create a hybrid solution, where half of appointment slots are walk-in while the other half are appointment only.

It also suggested CLS move to a majority appointment system, but keep walk-in appointments at sites that are branded as walk-in clinics.



We know walk-ins are waiting longer.

Cindy Chetley

ATTEMPTED MURDER

Local woman charged



Lucie Edwardson
Metro | Calgary

A woman has been charged with attempted murder following a three-week Calgary police investigation.

Det. Troy Cameron said police were called to a multi-family residence in the 1600 block of 12 Avenue SW just after midnight Dec. 17, 2015 after reports of loud noises coming from the suite above.

Upon their arrival, police found a man in serious medical condition. Two women were also found inside the residence, both uninjured.

Cameron said the victim was attacked in his own residence and all three people were acquaintances. "We believe alcohol was involved and consumed by all parties," he said. "It's unknown how long they've been acquaintances."

Both women were questioned by CPS, while the injured man was transported to hospital in life-threatening condition where he remains.

"He's recovering," said Cameron. "He's suffered significant head injuries."

Investigators believe it was an unprovoked attack, however a specific motive isn't yet known.

Cameron said because the case is before the courts CPS is unable to disclose if a weapon was used in the attack.

Stephanie Favel, 32, was arrested Saturday and charged with attempted murder. She will appear in court Jan. 6.

"We've run all the information and evidence collected by the crown prosecutor and deemed that the charge of attempted murder was appropriate," said Cameron.

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AIRDRIE

Promoter fighting to launch MMA events



Aaron Chatha
Metro | Calgary

Airdrie may soon see an upturn in blood-stained mats, broken bones and hard-earned victories — the city's council is looking into creating a combative sports commission, which will allow for MMA fights to be held in the city.

The decision came after

a push by Mohamed Benini, owner of a local taxi company, at a December council meeting. Benini hopes to promote fights in Airdrie.

"Being in the taxi business, I see the bars very busy during UFC events — that means there's a demand for it," said Benini. "I think my promotion can bring exciting fights and a different type of event compared to MMA events happening in Calgary."

Only one member of council, Coun. Allan Hunter, was opposed to the combative sports commission, but couldn't be reached for comment.

Should the commission be approved, Benini said his events would focus more on local talent, and he aims to pay his fighters better than most in the industry. His first hurdle, however, is that combative sports are regulated on a municipal level in Alberta.

In Calgary, the Boxing and Wrestling Commission was renamed the Combative Sports Commission in 2007 to sanction and monitor the events.

"Airdrie is growing so fast it needs events like this," said Benini. "A lot of people talk about the arts — culture and concerts — in Airdrie, but we need to expand the entertainment in Airdrie. MMA promotions can bring eyes and ears to Airdrie."



Snow buildup just off the sidewalks is what gives people with mobility issues some of the most trouble, according to Cal Schuler, community development co-ordinator with Spinal Cord Injury Alberta. JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

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It's corners that count

CITY MOBILITY

Curb cuts are problematic for people in wheelchairs



Brodie Thomas
Metro | Calgary

Cal Schuler has a message for homeowners and businesses that live at the corner of any Calgary street: Shovel your curb cuts.

Schuler, community development co-ordinator with Spinal Cord Injury Alberta, said while most people are diligent about keeping the sidewalk surfaces clear of snow, it is the slope on each corner — known as a curb cut — that gives folks with mobility issues some of the greatest trouble this time of year.

"They get built up to the point where it's like a hill you have to climb up and over to get to the hilltop."

He said depending on the amount of snow, he might not even know where the curb cut is.

"Even if the building owners were more aware of where they throw their snow to, and where they let it build up. There's no way the city can go out and clear every crosswalk and curb cut."

Leanne Squair, issues strategist for access and disability issues in Calgary neighborhoods, said the city has come a long way when it comes to snow clearing and accessibility.

She said curb cuts are recognized as one of the biggest mobility problems, and it's one they don't have an easy solution for.

Squair sits on an advisory committee on accessibility that made a presentation to council two years ago on the need to do more snow clearing at bus stops.

"We have a really accessible public transportation system, but if you can't get to it, it's not much good," said Squair.

The answer was to set aside \$2 million to pay for snow clearing at designated bus stops. "There's 350 bus pads that get cleared when there's a snow event," she said. "During the winter you can call 311 — there's actually a dedicated line to dealing with snow issues."

311

The number any member of the public can call to get help with snow issues in the winter.

School modernization resolves heating issues

RENOVATIONS

Elementary students at St. Vincent de Paul enjoy new digs



Aaron Chatha
Metro | Calgary

The elementary students at St. Vincent de Paul are happy to be warm again.

The students were previously in portable units at Monsignor E.L. Doyle school while St. Vincent was being modernized. After spending only two days back in St. Vincent and exploring the new library learning commons, science lab and main entrance way, it's the heating system that has them the most impressed.

"The portables, sometimes they had trouble with the heating, so in the wintertime it was pretty cool," said Gabriel Beswick, Grade 5.

"And sometimes it's a little bit too squishy if you have more classes joining you," added Grade 2 student Raphael Cupe.

"The hallways were really tiny. So it's nice to be back, because the hallways are nice and big," continued Beswick.

+ BOILER ROOM

In addition to a brand new roof and more open school entrance hall, the boiler room was completely redone to install a new heating and water system.



Several students said the newly renovated library — stripped down to the studs and rebuilt — is one of their favourite new additions to the school. Partly because it has beanbag chairs. AARON CHATHA/METRO

"Most classrooms had chalkboards, which was kind of distracting."

"Our new ones have white boards," concluded Cupe, with satisfaction.

Principal Dan Farrell said the modernization project — which wrapped up nine months ahead of schedule — provides a better learning environment for the students.

"Although the building was built in 1967, it's 2016 technology," said Farrell. "We're pretty happy about that."



Although the building was built in 1967, it's 2016 technology. We're pretty happy about that.

St. Vincent de Paul principal Dan Farrell

The project was initially announced in February 2014, with construction starting in Fall of 2014. During that time, the junior high students in the K-9 school were allowed to stay, while the elementary school students were bussed to portable units located at

another school — essentially creating a school within a school.

For the junior high students who did stay, they were able to be among the first to enjoy the new science labs — although Dan Farrell indicated warmth was an important issue to

them as well. The construction blocked access to the gymnasium, forcing them to walk outside and enter through an auxiliary entrance.

"It's been a journey, with its challenges along the way, but the whole school community — the kids, staff and parents — have been very patient and had a positive attitude through this whole process," said Farrell.

"And we don't have any heating problems," added Cupe. Again.

HEALTH

Province scores low on youth nutrition



Sanam Islam
Metro | Edmonton

When it comes to nutrition and providing children with a healthy food environment, Alberta isn't making the grade.

The province was given an overall "C" rating by the University of Alberta's first-ever report card on the subject.

"Most parents want their kids to eat well, and kids also probably want to eat well, but in many cases there are barriers to doing that. It might be cost, lack of availability or the marketing of unhealthy foods," says Kim Raine, a public health professor at the university, and co-lead on the project.

The report card, which will be published on an annual basis, looked at 41 indicators from four key perspectives: the availability of food, marketing of food products, the cost of food and attitudes about food.

Messaging about food, as well as the lack of healthy foods options in schools and recreational facilities, were particularly worrisome.

Only about 60 per cent of food found at schools met Alberta's nutrition guidelines for children, while at recreational facilities, only 30 per cent of food was considered healthy.

"It's a good thing that Alberta has dietary guidelines for children, but they are not mandatory," Raine says. "Only some schools have taken them on, and they're far from mandatory at recreation facilities."

Raine says she hopes the report card results will encourage parents to advocate for healthier options in settings such as rec facilities.

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Libraries saw a million more visits in '15. JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

Free library cards popular

SERVICES

Removal of \$12 fee leads to 133,000 new subscribers



Who would have thought mak-

ing something free would make it more popular?

Bill Ptacek, CEO of the Calgary Public Library, said the library board voted to remove the \$12 fee and make all cards free as of Jan. 2 2015. That resulted in a significant increase of library patrons over the past year.

More than 133,000 new users obtained library cards in 2015, and metrics show they're using them, too.

"We saw an increase from

5.1 to 6.1 million visitors over the year," said Ptacek. "Correspondingly we had an increase in the number of Wi-Fi connections."

He noted there has also been an increase in the number of books placed on hold.

Alberta is unusual in that it allows public libraries to charge processing fees. Ptacek said that came into effect in the 1980s all across Alberta, and now Calgary and Edmonton

have led the way in getting rid of that fee again.

Krista Poole is CEO of CanLearn, a Calgary-based literacy organization. She said having free library cards is a great way to remove barriers to literacy.

"A big part of what we do as an agency is make learning more accessible. It's incredibly important that people have access to literacy resources that the library can provide," she said.

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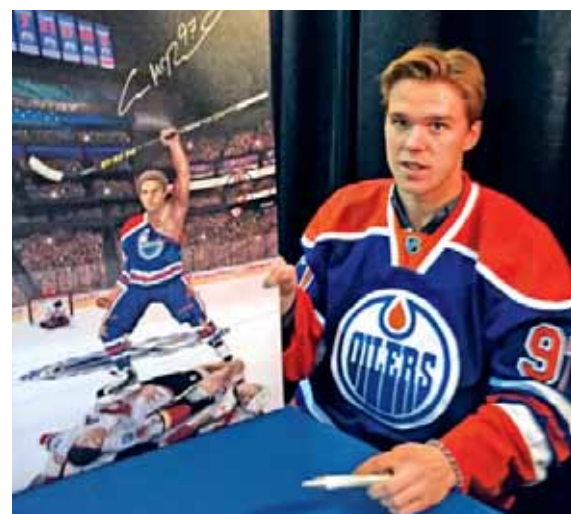


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Edmonton Oilers rookie Connor McDavid displays a one-of-a-kind piece of fan art. CONTRIBUTED/CHAD WATSON

CONNOR MCDAVID

Unique painting has Oiler dissing Flames



Edmonton Oilers fan Chad Watson set out to get a unique piece of team memorabilia. It would be hard to argue he failed that mission.

The Fort McMurray man commissioned an oil painting of rookie Connor McDavid, but it's not just any painting.

The painting features McDavid at centre ice, standing atop a mass of defeated Calgary Flames, holding his stick over his head with his jersey ripped to display a muscular chest.

"It's an individual item. No one else has it; it's all mine," Watson said of his piece. Watson worked with a painter in Serbia, over the Internet, to complete the masterpiece, drawing on a poster from the National Lampoon series.

"I wound up sending her about 20 or 30 different pictures, starting off with the National Lampoon and then a headshot of McDavid and then some jersey shots."

Watson said the details were

important. The scoreboard shows a 5-1 tally, a reference to the difference in Stanley Cups between the Oilers and Flames, and the crowd in the background is based on renderings of Rogers Place.

Watson had McDavid sign the painting at an event over the holidays. He said the talented rookie took it in stride. "He was laughing about it the whole time, just a big smile on his face," said Watson.

Watson's collection also includes jerseys denoting every year the Oilers have won the cup, which he has attempted to have signed by every member of those teams. He said collecting, to him, is about having a one-of-a-kind treasure.

"To me it's something a lot neater to have something like that than to have something anyone can just pull off the shelf."

“

It's an individual item. No one else has it.

Chad Watson

RED DEER

Child-sex trial begins for teenager

A trial has started for a central Alberta teenager facing nine sex assault-related charges involving five children.

The Red Deer teen is now 18 and can't be named due to his age at the time of the alleged offences.

He is charged with sexual assault, sexual interference, sexual assault with a weapon and committing an indecent act.

It's alleged the crimes against a boy and four girls happened between 2011 and 2015 in Red Deer, Red Deer County, Sylvan Lake and Edmonton.

Police say some of the alleged incidents occurred dur-

ing trips with Scouts Canada and Cadets Canada.

A teenage girl tearfully testified Wednesday about events on a cadet bus trip a few years ago.

She said she woke up to discover the accused had his hand up her shirt and was exposing himself to her.

She said she didn't report the incident right away because she was embarrassed and didn't think anyone would believe her.

The trial is set for four days, with all of the alleged victims as well as police officers expected to testify.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

BO COOPER

Firefighter OK'd for U.S. cancer program



Jeremy Simes
For Metro | Calgary

It's Bo Cooper's last chance to become cancer-free.

Cooper, a 26-year-old Fort McMurray firefighter, is on his third bout with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. On Tuesday, he learned that doctors at the National Institutes of Health Clinical Centre in Maryland have accepted him into a trial program for the CAR T-Cell immunotherapy.

The family has been in Maryland since Dec. 18, waiting to see if Cooper is a suitable candidate for the treatment, according to family spokesman Rob Van Hecke, a captain with the Fort McMurray Fire Department.

"He's had a lifetime dose of chemo and the number of times he's received radiation is getting high," he said. "There

are no options left in Canada for him."

The therapy requires doctors to collect T-cells — white blood cells that attack cells infected with microbes they deem foreign — from cancer patients. The cells are then taken to a lab where they're engineered to grow receptors that recognize tumour cells. Once T-cells multiply, they are then injected back into the patient to hopefully destroy the cancer.

"We're cautiously optimistic," Van Hecke said.

Thanks to fundraising efforts, the Coopers managed to raise \$600,000 for his trip to Maryland. The family expects to see the result of the test by the end of next week.



We're cautiously optimistic.

Family friend Rob Van Hecke



Since December 2014, thousands of mattresses have been dismantled and recycled at Re-Matt Inc. JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

Recycling firm goes to the mattresses

ENVIRONMENT

Re-Matt Inc. has saved more than 20,000 from landfill



Jennifer Friesen
For Metro

While taking a tour of a furniture warehouse, Shawn Cable had a strange thought: Where do all these mattresses go when they die?

He did some research and

found out that 6 million mattresses are sent to the landfill annually, with each taking up as much as 40 cubic feet. Alberta had no specialty recycling programs to send them to, so Cable opted to take matters into his own hands.

"These are huge items that have a major impact on the landfills," he said.

"And it's a mattress, everyone has one. I knew, from a business standpoint, that something could be done, and it's something that's really good for the city."

In December 2014, Cable officially launched Re-Matt Inc., a company dedicated to bridg-



That's what we're trying to do here: change habits in the city.

Shawn Cable

ing that gap.

From cotton to wood to metal springs, mattresses are 95 per cent recyclable, which Cable now sends off to become carpet lining, insulation, line-pipe for the oil and gas industry and even yoga accessories.

Last fall, Mount Royal University joined in to use the ser-

vice for the more than 1,020 beds within their on-campus residence.

"We usually go through about 100 (mattresses) a year," said Mark Keller, director of Residence Services at MRU.

"We didn't really have a lot of options, so they would go to the landfill ... This works for us, because anything we can divert from the landfill is positive for us."

Cable previously pulled 318 mattresses from Red Deer College and 120 from the University of Alberta. To-date he's recycled more than 20,000 total and he said he doesn't think they've "even scratched the surface yet."

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Evan Xie. CONTRIBUTED

NOVA SCOTIA

Student claims world title

Haley Ryan
Metro | Halifax

To many, memorizing 1,000 digits in under an hour seems impossible. But one Nova Scotia student has done just that and more, making history as Canada's first International Master of Memory during the 24th annual World Memory Championship in December.

Evan Xie, a Grade 10 student at King's-Edgemoor School in Windsor, has become one of only 160 people to receive the distinction, in a competition where about 300 people compete every year. Most are of university age or older.

Bar owner tastes 130-year-old beer

HALIFAX

Bottle found at bottom of harbour by scuba diver

It was the best of beers. It was the worst of beers (almost).

The century-old bottle from A. Keith & Son Brewery, the precursor to Halifax-based Alexander Keith's brewing company, was discovered in November by Jon Crouse on the bottom of Halifax harbour when he was scuba diving.

It has since undergone testing by experts at Dalhousie University who determined it was definitely beer, and it was safe — ish — to drink.

Local bar owner Chris Reynolds, who originally volunteered to have Crouse's discovery tested in a lab, finally got his chance to try a vial of the beer on Tuesday.

"No, it's not the worst I've

ever tasted," he said with a laugh.

"I wouldn't want to drink a pint of it, or put it on draft in the bar.

"If you put it beside any beer brewed in the last 10 years, it would be the worst. It's not something you would want to drink at all."

The historic beverage is believed to have been bottled between 1872 and 1890.

There is a tiny chance that it was made under the tutelage of Alexander Keith, himself, according to Bill Scollard, manager at Alexander Keith's Nova Scotia Brewery.

"What is really interesting about those dates is that there is a chance, albeit slim, that this beer was made while Mr. Keith was still alive," he said. "He passed away in 1873."

Given that the beer's ori-

ginal shelf life would be "in the order of a month or two," according to Alexander Keith's brew master Steve Durand, it's unlikely to taste much like it did when first bottled.

For Reynolds, an enthusiastic home brewer and bar owner, tasting such a historic beer was still a special experience.

"It smelled and tasted like really, really old beer," said Reynolds.

"I was really excited. It could've just been sea water.

"Despite the taste, it was one of the best beers I've ever had. Beers are all about context. The first beer after work is always the best."

Reynolds said it had the appearance of modern-day cloudy pale ale. Crouse added on Facebook that the liquid smelled like a mixture of "smoked hickory ham, beer and sulphur."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

“It smelled and tasted like really, really old beer.”

Chris Reynolds



Chris Reynolds, co-owner of a Halifax bar and an expert on craft brewing, samples 100-year-old beer found recently at the bottom of Halifax harbour. CONTRIBUTED/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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WILDLIFE Newly named male polar bear cubs York and Eli, shown at Winnipeg's Assiniboine Park Zoo, are named for York Factory First Nation, which has traditional lands that include important polar bear denning habitats. Eli is named for a York Factory elder. HANDOUT/ASSINIBOINE ZOO/THE CANADIAN PRESS

INDIGENOUS ISSUES

Families meet to talk about coming inquiry

The families of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls have been gathering for years — to share their stories, support each other and call for action — but this time was different.

Now that the federal government has committed to holding a national inquiry into the more than 1,200 First Nations, Métis and Inuit women and girls who have been murdered or gone missing in Canada, families came together in Thunder Bay

Wednesday to share their hopes and fears of what it should set out to achieve.

"A lot of people were feeling that they were finally going to have an opportunity to have some closure," said deputy grand chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum of Nishnawbe Aski Nation, which represents 49 First Nations in northern Ontario.

"Maybe the justice may not take place, but I think even being provided an opportunity



They will leave this meeting and go home with the memories of their loved ones.

Chief Connie Gray MacKay

to be heard on their concerns and having an opportunity to change the present process,"

said Achneepineskum, who was at the pre-inquiry consultation meeting Wednesday afternoon.

So were Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett and Status of Women Minister Patricia Hajdu, who along with Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould are hearing from families, national aboriginal organizations, frontline service providers and other stakeholders as part of their pre-inquiry consultation process.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Feds in fight over IT rules

CONSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGE

Decision took away ability of courts to select own purchases

Newly released documents show the country's highest court is ready to launch a legal battle with the federal government over new IT rules which the Supreme Court of Canada fears would threaten its independence.

The Supreme Court is not alone in these concerns: the Federal Court, Federal Court of Appeal, Court Martial Appeal Court and Tax Court are all prepared to launch a constitutional challenge against having the government's super-IT department involved in their digital affairs.

The federal Liberals are now left to decide how to handle an issue created by a decision of the previous Conservative government that came into effect during the federal election.

That decision forced the courts to go through Shared Services Canada for all IT purchases, such as servers, routers

and software, rather than letting them make the procurements on their own. The courts had that power until Sept. 1, when the new rules kicked in and made them a "mandatory client" of Shared Services Canada, which oversees purchases and digital services for 43 of the heaviest IT users in the federal government.

The move approved by the Conservative cabinet in May 2015 was supposed to save money, since Shared Services Canada buys in bulk for the federal government, and improve digital security, because Shared Services Canada buys from safe suppliers.

Briefing material provided to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau shows the courts were worried that having a government department involved in their IT services "and the perceived implications for control of their data" infringed on judicial independence. "They must maintain control of their data, not only because of concerns about confidentiality, but also because an independent judiciary cannot tolerate having its sensitive information controlled by a separate branch," reads the briefing. THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Shovelling friends don't miss an African beat

For Richard Laubonet, the important thing in life is to put joy in everything you do.

And that's exactly what the African dance and fitness instructor did when he and two friends picked up shovels to clear an area of a park in north-end Montreal.

In a video that has since garnered almost 380,000 views on Facebook, Laubonet and friends Kevin Noah (from Cameroon) and Abdul Somade (from Togo) fling heaps of snow over



Montreal trio dance while moving snow. SCREENSHOT

their shoulders in a choreographed dance set to African music. They laugh and sing and use their shovels as props while moving in unison in the impromptu dance in the snow. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Prince William and wife Kate released this image of son George on his first day at school.

CONTRIBUTED/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Prince George has class

The heir to the heir to the heir to the British throne has started nursery school.

Prince William and his wife Kate marked the occasion by releasing two photographs

of two-and-a-half-year-old George outside the school building.

The royal couple had earlier announced he would be attending Westacre Montes-

sori School in Norfolk, 180 kilometres north of London.

The school has said he will receive the same treatment as other pupils.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

H-bomb threat provokes world

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

North Korea condemned globally for its actions

Soon after the ground shook around its nuclear testing facility, North Korea trumpeted its first hydrogen bomb test — a self-proclaimed “H-bomb of justice” that would mark a major and unanticipated advance for its still-limited nuclear arsenal.

The announcement Wednesday by the defiant, impoverished country was met with widespread skepticism, as well as a strong condemnation by the UN Security Council, which said it would begin work on a resolution for new international sanctions.

North Korea's fourth nuclear test likely pushed its scientists and engineers closer to their goal of building a warhead

small enough to place on a missile that can reach the U.S. mainland. But South Korea's spy agency thought the estimated explosive yield from the blast was much smaller than what even a failed hydrogen bomb detonation would produce, and the White House said its early analysis of underground activity “is not consistent” with the North's claim of a successful H-bomb test.

There was high-level concern in Seoul and elsewhere. South Korean President Park Geun-hye ordered her military to bolster its combined defence posture with U.S. forces. She called the test a “grave provocation” and “an act that threatens our lives and future.” Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said, “We absolutely cannot allow this.”

U.S. Defence Secretary Ash Carter spoke by phone with his South Korean counterpart Han Min-Koo, and they agreed that a North Korean nuclear

66

We absolutely cannot allow this.

Japanese Prime Minister
Shinzo Abe

test would be an “unacceptable and irresponsible provocation,” according to Carter's spokesman, Peter Cook.

North Korea goes to great lengths to conceal its tests by conducting them underground and tightly sealing off tunnels or other vents through which radioactive residue could escape.

A successful H-bomb test would be a big advance in North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

Fusion is the main principle behind the hydrogen bomb, which can be hundreds of times more powerful than atomic bombs that use fission.

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Iraq offers to mediate for Saudi Arabia, Iran

MIDDLE EAST

Tensions rise across region over conflict

Iraq on Wednesday offered to mediate between Saudi Arabia and Iran after tensions soared following the kingdom's execution of a Shiite cleric and attacks on two Saudi diplomatic posts in the Islamic Republic.

The standoff has seen Saudi Arabia sever diplomatic ties with its longtime rival and could hinder efforts to resolve the conflicts in Syria and Yemen, where Riyadh and Tehran back opposite sides, as well as affect the implementation of the Iran nuclear deal.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari proposed mediation during a news conference in Tehran, but also referred to the execution of

Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr as a "crime."

Iraq has undertaken a delicate balancing act amid the latest regional turmoil.

The Shiite-led government in Baghdad relies on Iranian help to battle the extremist Islamic State group, but is also trying to repair its ties to oil-rich Saudi Arabia, which last week sent an ambassador to Baghdad for the first time in 25 years.

Speaking alongside Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, al-Jaafari said Iraq's place in the heart of the Middle East allows it to play a role in trying to "alleviate tensions."

"This responsibility has been given to us and we have been active from the early moments to lessen tensions to prevent a disaster from happening that could affect the entire region," he said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Iraqi protesters chant during a rally to protest the execution of Saudi Shiite Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PARIS ATTACKS

Morocco helped ID ringleader: Official

A top Moroccan intelligence official said on Tuesday that it was his country that put French and Belgian police on the trail of the network behind the November attacks in Paris that killed 130, and likely spared more lives by pinpointing the location of the suspected ringleader.

The director of the Central Bureau of Judicial Investigations, Abdelhak Khame, said in an interview that "this intelligence precisely allowed France to avoid more severe attacks that were planned."

European investigators are trying to piece together the geography of the Nov. 13 attacks, focusing attention not only on Paris and Brussels — where some of the attackers lived — but on other parts of Europe as well as the trail of some to Syria. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) claimed responsibility for the attacks on restaurants, cafés, a noted music hall and the sports stadium.

France's interior minister had said that a non-European country led the French to suspected ringleader Abdelhamid Abaaoud, who was killed five days after the carnage in a raid in the Paris suburb of Saint-Denis.

Abaaoud was among the attackers who lived in Molenbeek, a Brussels neighbourhood that is home to numerous Belgians of Moroccan descent. Khame claimed that Moroccan intelligence quickly pointed police to Molenbeek.

"After the attacks that took place in Paris, Morocco communicated that they (the attackers) were connected to a Belgian affiliate in Molenbeek," Khame said. "It was true because afterwards, thanks to the intelligence that we

had, we were able to communicate to France that the mastermind of this group ... Abdelhamid Abaaoud, was still in Paris at Saint-Denis."

Morocco, a Muslim kingdom that is a major U.S. ally and bul-

work of stability in North Africa, shares intelligence on potential extremists with Western allies and across the Arab world, from Libya to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, Khame said.

"Morocco is in a war with terrorism," he said.

"We don't wait for individuals to carry out the attacks ... We need to act before we react," Khame said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

“We don't wait for individuals to carry out the attacks.”
Abdelhak Khame
Intelligence official

IN BRIEF

Shiite rebels targeted

Yemeni security officials say the Saudi-led coalition has intensified airstrikes on the Yemeni capital, Sanaa, targeting Shiite rebels known as Houthis. The officials said airstrikes targeted rebel positions in Sanaa, the presidential palace and airport. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Venezuela congress duels with ruling socialists

Venezuela's new opposition

congress swore in three lawmakers barred by the Supreme Court from taking their seats, a direct confrontation with the ruling socialists.

The court had issued an order against the lawmakers from the remote state of Amazonas from taking their seats to give officials time to look into allegations of electoral fraud. The move enraged the opposition. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



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IN BRIEF

Star Wars unseats Avatar

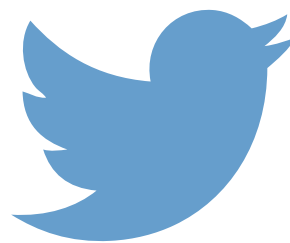
In just 20 days in theatres, Star Wars: The Force Awakens has unseated Avatar as the No. 1 North American movie of all time. As of Tuesday, the film was just shy of the record at \$758.2 million.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Netflix in more countries

Netflix has begun streaming its Internet video service in 130 more countries, nearly completing its expansion a year ahead of schedule. It is now available in 190 countries.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Twitter not tied to 140 characters

SOCIAL MEDIA

CEO tweets screenshot of 1,325-character message

Twitter appears ready to loosen its decade-old restriction on the length of messages in a bid to make its service more appealing to a wider audience accustomed to the greater freedom offered by Facebook and other forums.

CEO and co-founder Jack Dorsey telegraphed Twitter's intentions in a tweet Tuesday after the technology news site Re/Code reported the company is exploring increasing its limits on text from 140 characters to as many as 10,000.

Dorsey didn't directly address the Re/Code report that cited unnamed people, but he made it clear that Twitter isn't wedded to the 140-char-



Twitter co-founder and CEO Jack Dorsey telegraphed that change is coming in a tweet on Tuesday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

acter limit. He illustrated his point by posting a screenshot of a text consisting of 1,325 characters.

If Twitter were to allow tweets to span 10,000 characters, it could produce 1,700-word dissertations, based on the size of Dorsey's extended post. In his message, Dorsey wrote that Twitter has already

noticed that many of its roughly 300 million users already have been including screenshots of lengthy texts in their tweets. He indicated Twitter is examining ways to give people more room to express themselves without polluting the service with gasbags.

Imposing some restraint "inspires creativity and brevity.

And a sense of speed. We will never lose that feeling," Dorsey pledged.

At the same time, Dorsey said Twitter isn't "going to be shy about building more utility and power into Twitter for people. As long as it's consistent with what people want to do, we're going to explore it."

Analysts said Dorsey is probably trying to avoid a backlash among long-time Twitter users who consider the 140-character tweeting limit sacred. At the same time, he needs to respond to company shareholders pinning for a bigger audience that would generate more advertising revenue.

More revenue eventually could help Twitter turn a profit for the first time in its history.

Twitter can't afford "to become stagnant, they need to get bigger if they want to build a more relevant advertising platform," said Topeka Capital Markets analyst Blake Harper.

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ROSEMARY WESTWOOD

metroview

Charlie Hebdo is just not interesting enough to offend me

Despite being Catholic, I'm not offended by the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo's new cover depicting God as a Kalashnikov-wielding terrorist.

I suppose I could be — the Vatican newspaper is — but that would mean taking the editorial position of the notoriously inflammatory publication seriously. And I don't.

To be clear: The attack one year ago today at Charlie Hebdo's Paris offices was unconscionable, as was the subsequent attack on a Jewish supermarket in the city, which together killed 17 people.

But demeaning faith in the most violent pen strokes is the magazine's raison d'être, and so I'm not surprised or offended by Charlie Hebdo marking the anniversary with everything it's got.

According to the Associated Press, the magazine features editorials attacking "university students who wear veils or openly pray in classrooms, hospital patients who refuse medical treatment from someone of the opposite sex and France's intelligence community. Mixed in were blasphemous caricatures targeting a range of beliefs, obscene sketches" and colourful profanity.

One editor wrote the magazine is commemorating colleagues who died "for daring to laugh at religion."

Richard Rohr, a prominent U.S. Catholic priest, has said

he loves when atheists laugh at religions for stories like the Garden of Eden, because "No one believes that." Those stories are metaphors, he says, intended to describe a God who is otherwise indescribable.

Charlie Hebdo's atheism is as simplistic as laughing at a virgin birth. The magazine is practically fundamental in its anti-religious stance. Meanwhile, globally, eight in 10 people identify with a religion.

The magazine doesn't even speak to the more secular western experience of faith. In Canada, for example, fully 73 per cent of people believe in God, though only 30 per cent subscribe to a religion.

Not only does a cover like yesterday's not surprise me, then, it doesn't even stimulate me intellectually. The magazine can heap scorn better than most, but it has a juvenile understanding of that which it hates, and constructs no reasonable alternative.

The magazine makes the mistake of thinking insulting people is, de facto, a worthy goal. And in its commitment to offend and anger strangers, it has something in common with terrorist propaganda videos (on a far lesser scale).

On the other hand, the magazine does support the free movement of ideas by exploring the outermost reaches of free speech.

I'll give it that, and then get on with my faith.

the big question

Will Obama's tears endear Americans to gun control?

Well, he's unlikely to sway the NRA, but as far as emotional impact goes, **breaking down on live TV isn't a bad strategy for the president.** Scientists have many theories about why adults cry, given that, unlike children, they can use words to express what's wrong. Some speculate that crying evolved as an "attachment behaviour": It's a way to ask others for help when words fail us. And in fact, some studies suggest that photos of teary faces and sad stories with characters who cry both cause research participants to feel sympathetic sadness and a desire to support and comfort the crying person. If Barack Obama — who choked up Tuesday while enumerating the seemingly endless mass shootings that have rocked the U.S. during his presidency — elicited such empathy in his audience, logically they'd want to support his plan to ensure more gun dealers are licensed and conduct background checks. That's guaranteed to make the gun nuts want to weep.

Politician + alcoholism does not equal Rob Ford



Michael Coren
For Metro

To state the bitterly self-evident, politics is a dirty business. But there is also a cloak of decorum that sometimes covers the body politic, with journalists respecting the personal struggles and private pain of many of those who govern us.

There are times when the private and the public mingle to such an extent that we have a right to know.

I have often been impressed at how what is genuinely important on an individual but not political level has remained confidential.

But there are times, of course, when the private and the public mingle to such an extent that we have a right to know. Newly minted Liberal MP and former broadcaster Seamus O'Regan obviously believed this when he recently announced that he is seeking help in a treatment centre to "live an alcohol-free life." In other words, he struggles with alcohol, and as he begins his new work as a representative of the people, realizes that now is the time to change.

I have good friends who have acted similarly. The treatment can be relatively brief, but it's thorough and tough and the struggle never ends. Yet the hardest

part is over: the admission that there is a problem. It's humbling, frightening and, of course, opens one up to attack. As it most certainly did in this case.

Within hours of the O'Regan's statement, various conservative activists and even columnists and broadcasters were on the offensive, claiming that the man was "a drunk" and digging up criticisms he had made of former Toronto mayor Rob Ford. There's no difference between the two, they argued, but because one is a Liberal and close to Justin Trudeau he's getting an easy ride.

The juxtaposition is fatuous, offensive and downright cruel. I know O'Regan a little and have always found him to be a gentleman, but the greater point is that unlike Rob Ford, he was completely honest about his problem, there is

no police investigation and he doesn't associate with shady characters. There are no manic, racist rants and no embarrassing those people he represents.

Ford used prohibited drugs and repeatedly lied about it. O'Regan drank too much of what is sold on every major street in Canada and told us so. His husband tweeted how proud he was of his decision; Rob Ford is on film offering his wife to another man for sex.

What is remarkable is not how similar, but how different are these two cases. As for those who attacked a man at his most vulnerable, shame on you.

Michael Coren is a writer, broadcaster and author of the forthcoming *Epiphany: A Christian's Change of Heart & Mind over Same-Sex Marriage*. Find him on Twitter @michaelcoren.

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On the topic of Navel Gazing

WHO IS BLACK?

Michael Ian Black swears that he has "no interest" in celebrity culture. "I hate it," he said, "maybe because I'm not enough of a celebrity to get the perks." Let's take him at his word. But here's how you might otherwise know the sly comedian:

Wet Hot American Summer

Black stars in the best known sequence of this recently Netflix-revived cult favourite: a surprisingly tender love scene with Bradley Cooper. In his new book, Black reveals that they both wore tube socks because Black was so self-conscious about his feet.

Jim Gaffigan Show

Black plays Daniel, the meticulously put-together antagonist to the show's everyman titular star. The pair have a gift for repartee on Twitter, too. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



INTERVIEW

Michael Ian Black shows a vulnerable side in new book

With a pair of deeply honest memoirs, comedian Michael Ian Black has now allowed a public transition from irony-shielded comic prankster to real, fully dimensional person.

And all that pesky humanity has led to some uncomfortable moments.

"Because I have the gift of being unapproachable and kind of a dick, people rarely share with me, but I have noticed that people who have read the book feel like they know me (and) my marriage, and that's a strange thing to encounter," he said recently. "It's especially weird for my wife when people meet her and they're like: 'Oh yes, I know all about you.' That doesn't go over well."

The furiously prolific Black — who is simultaneously starring in several shows including Another Period and The Jim Gaffigan Show, hosting the popular podcast How to Be Amazing and compulsively nurturing a massive Twitter following — has returned to the realm of autobiography with the newly released Navel Gazing. The book finds the Wet Hot American Summer star observing his mother's stoic struggle



Michael Ian Black's latest book finds him observing his mother's struggle with cancer and investigating the physical insecurities that have plagued him since childhood. MIKE POINT/WIRE IMAGE

with cancer while curiously investigating the physical insecurities that have plagued him as long as he can remember.

Somehow, a book about a family member's grave diagnosis is unfathomably funny.

For this he credits his mother, whom he interviewed extensively and "got to know a lot better." For instance, Black's mom followed one of her many major surgeries — which included the removal of her belly button — by taking a marker and scrawling florid thank-yous to hospital staff across her stomach.

Between this intimate mem-

oir and his last, You're Not Doing it Right — which the author says was too personal even for his wife, who has chosen not to read his latest book — Black has revealed depths that even close friends didn't know he had.

The one place he doesn't have to worry about those revelations reverberating, however, is Hollywood. "People in show business don't read," he said. "There's little to no danger of them having read my book."

How is your mother doing? Terribly. Her illnesses are non-stop and unabating. That's a

very hard thing for her to live with and for those of us who love her to live with. But her attitude about it has always been remarkable. It's inspiring.

How did she react to your book?

She loved it. There was no pushback about anything, which makes me think she didn't read it. But she said she did, so that's good enough for me. That means I can publish it.

You mentioned your wife

Martha didn't want to read it.

How about your kids? Oh God, no, not at all. They don't care about anything.

Even (teenage son) Elijah?

He's expressed no interest in it and I have no interest in sharing it with him. I assume there will come a point in his life — probably after I suffer a heart attack in the next six months — where he will have some curiosity about his history and my life. Now he has two books he can read for that information.

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Brendan Dassey is escorted into court in 2007 for sentencing. Dassey's case is at the centre of the Netflix documentary series *Making a Murderer*. HERALD TIMES/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Why Making a Murderer has everybody talking

STREAMING

A primer to the doc dissecting a complex legal case

The 10-part Netflix documentary series *Making a Murderer*, which casts doubt on the legal process in the case of convicted killers Steven Avery and his then-teenage nephew Brendan Dassey, has prompted celebrities to armchair sleuths to flood online message boards and Twitter feeds.

Authorities involved with the Wisconsin case say the series is slanted and omits crucial facts that led to Avery and Dassey being found guilty in the death of photographer Teresa Halbach.

The filmmakers, meanwhile, are standing by their work that spans nearly a decade and largely concentrates on the defence and perspective of Avery and Dassey's relatives.

The rush of attention has left many wondering: How did we get here? And what's next?

The back story

Avery made national headlines in 2003 when he was released after spending nearly two decades behind bars after being wrongfully convicted of rape. Two years later, Avery and Dassey were charged with killing Halbach, who visited the Avery family salvage yard to take photos of a minivan on Halloween. Her bones and belongings were found burned near Avery's trailer. Both were convicted and sentenced to life terms, but only Dassey is eligible for parole — in 2048.

The series' take

The documentary strongly suggests the possibility that Manitowoc County sheriff's deputies planted evidence against Avery, including a key found in his bedroom and blood found in the victim's vehicle. But Sheriff Robert Hermann denied that Tuesday. He said he watched the series: "I call it a film. It's missing a lot of important pieces of evidence."

Authorities say doc is biased
The series spends much of its

time detailing the perspective of Avery and Dassey family members. The case's special prosecutor, Ken Kratz has told other media outlets that the documentary ignores the majority of the physical evidence. The omissions include the fact that Avery's DNA was found on the hood latch on Halbach's SUV, which was hidden on the salvage lot. Kratz has also said a bullet fired from Avery's gun was found in his garage with Halbach's DNA on it.

The filmmakers disagree

Laura Ricciardi and Moira Demos have stood by their work. They said in an email to the AP that critics who might say they intentionally omitted or underplayed key evidence to make the series more entertaining or tragic are wrong. "Those accusations are untrue and unfounded," the statement said.

Online petition

It seems unlikely an online petition seeking a pardon will work. The request posted on Change.org started by petitioning President Barack Obama, who

has no such authority in this type of case, since it's not a federal matter. Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker spokesperson Laurel Patrick said Tuesday in an email to the AP that the governor hasn't watched the series and that "early in his administration, Gov. Walker made the decision not to issue pardons. Those who feel they have been wrongly convicted can seek to have their convictions overturned by a higher court."

Viewer reaction

Celebrities have tweeted about how into the series they are, late night talk show host Seth Meyers spoofed it and fake Twitter accounts have been set up for some of the main players in the case. However, Sheriff Hermann said some of his officers have received threats in emails and voicemails. He said one was from a convicted felon who said an officer should "take his own life, or else he'd come up there and take it for him." Hermann said Tuesday that threat was passed along to Florida authorities to investigate. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Inside Spotify's musical genre splicing

SONIC ALGORITHMS

Breaking down music by its digital signatures

Would you classify Justin Bieber as pop or "pop Christmas"? And is Arcade Fire a rock band or "permanent wave"? How about describing Ed Sheeran as "neo mellow," Alabama Shakes as "stomp and holler" or the versatile Grimes as "grave wave," "metropolis," "nu gaze," or all of the above?

Spotify's "data alchemist" Glenn McDonald can proudly claim authorship of some of those eccentric descriptors. His company has used a complex algorithm to analyze and categorize upwards of 60 million songs on a molecular level — and the micro-classifications now number 1,387 sub-genres in total.

Ultimately, these machinations are allowing a new level of specificity to answer that impossible old first-date query: What kind of music are you into?

"The most interesting thing is how much music there is in the world," McDonald said. "The number of places where I ex-

pected to find five or 10 bands and found 200 is just amazing."

Using a tool called machine listening, songs are analyzed by Spotify's music-intelligence division the Echo Nest based on their digital signatures for a number of factors, including tempo, acoustic-ness, energy, danceability, strength of the beat and emotional tone.

Taken together, those numbers can identify the distinguishing aural characteristics of different genres and regional sounds. McDonald has provided a visual representation of the subtle sonic differences at everynoise.com, which maps music along a spec-

trum where mechanical sounds reside at the top, organic at the bottom, atmospheric on the left and bouncy on the right.

The still-evolving tool can highlight the subtle differences in the hip-hop of Quebec and Finland, for instance, or create cross-genre comparisons between such unlikely bedfellows as Thai indie and Spanish new wave. Any curiosity about what a genre called "necrogrind," "fallen angel" or "electrofox" could possibly sound like can be satisfied with a click.

"(People) imagine metal humanoid robots sitting in chairs with silver headphones on nod-

ding mechanically to songs and making up their robot minds," said McDonald. "But the process is totally different. There's no emotion involved. The machines are not pretending to be people."

Once the machines have identified sonic similarities, a human touch is required to research the sub-genres or create new ones, a task that often falls to McDonald himself. It can be vexing as sub-genres are divvied into progressively tinier fractions; indie pop, for instance, has been subdivided into shiver pop, gauze pop, etherpop, indie fuzz pop, popgaze, and so on.

In analyzing so much musical

minutiae, McDonald has noticed that for all this century's rampant boundary-blurring, distinctive differences still exist between types of music.

"I don't think genres have gone away ... any more than cuisines have disappeared. There are more fusions," he said. "So just like you can find the Korean burrito place, that doesn't mean there aren't also Korean restaurants and Mexican restaurants."

"Maybe the firmness of the boundaries has gone away. It's more possible to exist in the spaces between genres as they blend into each other."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

'stomp & holler'



'grave wave'



'neo mellow'



An algorithm used by Spotify defines the sound of Alabama Shakes frontwoman Brittany Howard, left, experimental musicmaker Grimes and singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran. GETTY IMAGES

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ANNA BROOKS/FOR METRO

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2 INGLEWOOD

Open house: Spots are 75 per cent sold at SoBow, an Inglewood condo development focusing on open space/loft-style living. See the sales centre at 102 63 Inglewood Park SE (open Tuesday to Friday from noon to 6 p.m., Saturday to Monday from noon to 5 p.m.) or call 587-353-8955 to learn more.

3 CONNAUGHT

Open house: Check out an open house in a beautifully designed tower in a prime downtown Calgary location. The open house will be held January 2 from 2 to 4 p.m. at #2603 210 15 Avenue SE.

A brand-new Mission

MEET THE CONDO

Project overview

Mission 17 is a brand-new rental project by the Strategic Group. Situated in one of Calgary's most sought-after communities, renters who sign up before March 1, 2016 will receive 30 days free rent.

Location and transit

Mission 17 is a great spot for on-foot travellers and cyclists. Only steps away from 17 Avenue, Mission 17 also hosts a number of bus routes and is near Calgary's downtown LRT stations and Victoria Park/Stampede station. For drivers, major roads like Macleod Trail and Elbow Drive are right around the corner.

In the neighbourhood

There aren't many communities that rival Mission — with 4 Street right near the river and a number of beautiful walking and cycling paths, it's great for nature lovers. Mission is also home to an endless array of award-winning restaurants, coffee shops and boutique stores.

MISSION 17



CONTRIBUTED

Housing Amenities

Located in the eclectic neighbourhood of Mission, this new rental property presents an affordable alternative to owning a home. With a café and other retail amenities on the main floor, these brand new one and two bedroom suites bring contemporary style to life.

ANNA BROOKS/FOR METRO

+ NEED TO KNOW

What: Mission 17
Builder: Strategic Group
Location: Corner of 17 Avenue SW and Centre Street South
Building: Apartments
Sizes: Range from 513 sq. ft. to 837 sq. ft.
Pricing: Rentals from \$1,500

to \$2,300 per month
Suites: One to two bedroom suites
Status: Leases starting
Occupancy: February 1, 2016
Phone: 403-234-1958
Email: info@mission17.ca
Website: mission17.ca

4

BEAUTIFUL BLASTS FROM THE DESIGN WORLD PAST

They say that everything that goes around, comes around. Home decor trends for 2016 are certainly proving that true. Look for inspiration from the 1970s and '80s when accessing the trends for this year— a flashback in time becomes the future for our homes.

Karl Lohnes
For Metro Canada



1 Darth Vader Toaster
The scariest reminder of the late '70s is now available to imprint your toast each morning. \$75, UrbanOutfitters.com.

2 Desigual Denim Folk Duvet Cover
Add some jean patches and flower-power for some Partridge family love in the bedroom. \$179, Simons.ca

3 Retro Vase
They'll think you dug this one up from your grannies basement. \$65, CB2.com

4 Dial Dining Table
'70s gold and walnut offer up stylish dining from the past. \$900, CB2.com

Lakers GM Mitch Kupchak told ESPN that Kobe Bryant's retirement tour comes ahead of the development of L.A.'s young players

BASEBALL

Griffey Jr., Piazza into Hall of Fame

Ken Griffey Jr. has been elected to the baseball Hall of Fame with the highest voting percentage ever and legendary catcher Mike Piazza is joining him.

Jeff Bagwell and former Montreal Expos star Tim Lincecum fell short in results announced Wednesday.

A star slugger of the Steroids Era who was never tainted by accusations of drug use, Griffey was on 437 of 440 votes in his first appearance on the Baseball Writers' Association of America ballot. His 99.3 percentage topped Tom Seaver's 98.84 in 1992.

Piazza, on the ballot for the fourth time, received 365 votes.

A player needs 75 per cent to gain election. Bagwell missed by 15 votes and Raines by 23 in totals announced Wednesday.

After about 100 writers who no longer are active lost their

votes under new rules, there were significant increases for a pair of stars accused of steroids use. Roger Clemens rose to 45 per cent and Barry Bonds to 44 per cent, both up from about 37 per cent last year.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ken Griffey Jr.

GETTY IMAGES FILE

IN BRIEF

Predators send Jones to Ohio for centre Johansen

The Nashville Predators traded defenceman Seth Jones to the Columbus Blue Jackets for centre Ryan Johansen on Wednesday, giving up a young piece of their defence in search of offence.

Johansen, 23, and the fourth overall pick in the 2010 draft, has six goals and 20 assists in 38 games this season.

The blue-liner Jones, 21, who went fourth overall in 2013, has played 40 games for Nashville this season with one goal and 10 assists.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kings give Lecavalier one more kick at the Cup

Vincent Lecavalier is ready for one last run at the Stanley Cup, and the Los Angeles Kings are giving him a chance.

The Kings acquired Lecavalier and defenceman Luke Schenn from the Philadelphia Flyers on Wednesday in a trade for centre Jordan Weal and a third-round pick.

After playing sparingly for the Flyers over the past two seasons, the 35-year-old Lecavalier plans to end his 17-year NHL career this summer.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

October's very over

NHL

First-month struggles distant memory for goalie Ramo

Karri Ramo is a patient man in a business that isn't.

When the then-struggling Flames put the goaltender on waivers in October, they basically said they were ready to say farewell.

Fast forward 11 weeks and Ramo is back to No. 1 in Calgary's depth chart. The Finn has started the last 10 games for Calgary and 25 of its last 28.

As he's sorted out his game, so have the Flames. Ramo's resurgence coincides with Calgary's climb out of the NHL's basement and into playoff contention in the Pacific Division near the half-way mark of the regular season.

Ramo's save percentage has risen from .868 in October to .913. After a 3-8-1 month to start the season, the Flames (19-18-2) have won 11 of their last 15.

"October is long gone," Ramo said Wednesday following practice. "Obviously at that moment, it's not the greatest feeling."

"In the NHL, everything changes so quickly.... You have to keep moving on. In a couple days, I was back up here."

The Flames hit the midway point of the season after games at home against

the Arizona Coyotes and San Jose Sharks on Thursday and Monday. Flames head coach Bob Hartley said winger Jiri Hudler will be out at least a week with an undisclosed injury.

It's taken time, twists and turns for the Flames goaltending situation to settle in 2015-16. The team began the season with three goalies — Ramo, Jonas Hiller and Joni Ortio — all under one-way contracts.

Hiller started the majority of games for the Flames last season, but was supplanted by Ramo in the playoffs. The

Flames re-signed Ramo to a one-year, \$3.8-million deal on July 1.

After clearing waivers, Ramo's October AHL stint in Stockton, Calif., was brief because of

an injury to Hiller. Ramo then took the ball and ran with it.

The way Ramo sees it, playing a lot of games accelerates improvement.

"The more you play, the more you always want to be better," he said. "You change small things all the time. You try to get better stuff into your game and maybe that's been the key."

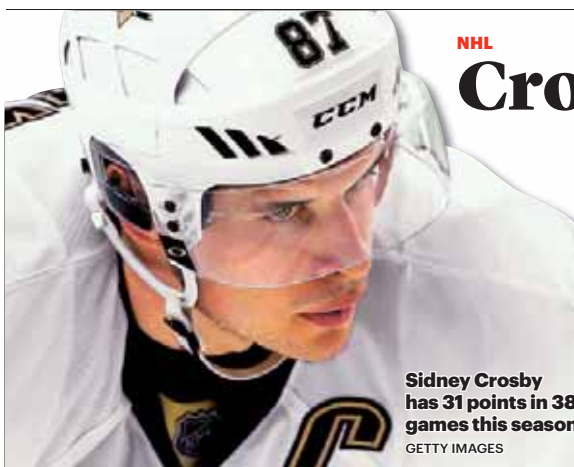
THE CANADIAN PRESS

3.10

Once the worst team in the NHL defensively, Calgary's goals-against average has contracted to 3.10.

Karri is a huge student of the game. He's 29 and he's still trying to learn ways that will make his game easy, simplify his movement.

Flames goaltending coach Jordan Sigalet



Sidney Crosby has 31 points in 38 games this season.

GETTY IMAGES

NHL

Crosby left off of all-star team rosters

The upcoming NHL all-star game will be missing one of the sport's top players.

Pittsburgh Penguins forward Sidney Crosby wasn't included on the roster list Wednesday for the league's mid-season showcase in Nashville on Jan. 30-31.

As part of a new format this year, players will take part in a three-game tournament, played in a 3-on-3 format, and fea-

turing teams representing each NHL division.

Veteran centre Evgeni Malkin and defenceman Kris Letang will represent the Penguins on the Metropolitan Division team. Roster limitations — six forwards, three defencemen and two goalies for each division — led to Crosby's exclusion.

Crosby, a 28-year-old native of Cole Harbour, has appeared in only one all-star game (2007), missing three due to Olympic commitments and five because

+ CAPTAINS

Florida's Jaromir Jagr (Atlantic), Chicago's Patrick Kane (Central), Washington's Alex Ovechkin (Metropolitan) and Arizona's John Scott (Pacific) are the captains.

of injuries. His numbers this season are decent but not at their usual level.

Since his 102-point rookie

campaign in 2005-06, Crosby has averaged over a point per game in every season until this one. His play has improved of late but he still entered Wednesday's game in Chicago with 31 points (12 goals, 19 assists) in 38 games.

The Flames placed Johnny Gaudreau and Mark Giordano on the Pacific Division squad. Also named were forwards Taylor Hall of the Oilers and Daniel Sedin of the Canucks.

THE CANADIAN PRESS, WITH FILES FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



GETTY IMAGES

RECIPE Pumpkin Gnocchi



PHOTO: MAYA VINNETI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada



So good it's worth the effort.

Ready in
Prep time: 60 minutes
Serves 4

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups pumpkin puree
- 3/4 cup fresh ricotta
- 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, finely grated
- 1 Tbsp brown sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- 1 1/3 cups flour
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/4 lb cremini mushrooms, cleaned, trimmed and sliced
- 3 Tbsp fresh sage, chopped

Directions

1. In a large bowl, combine potato puree with ricotta until well blended. Add the Parmesan, sugar, salt and nutmeg and blend. Add a 1/2 cup of flour at a time until a soft dough forms.

- 2.** Turn dough out onto a well-floured surface and separate into 3 or 4 pieces. Using your hands, roll dough out into a long, even tube, about 10-inch in diameter. With a sharp paring knife, cut each rope into about 20 pieces. Keep working until you have about a 60 pieces.
- 3.** Bring a big pot of well-salted water to a boil.
- 4.** Melt butter in a large skillet until it starts to brown. Add mushrooms and sage and cook for 3 minutes, and remove from heat.
- 5.** Add gnocchi to the boiling water about a dozen at a time. Cook each batch for about 5 or 6 minutes, until the gnocchi floats to the top. Allow water to return to a boil between batches. Place cooked gnocchi in a large bowl and set aside.
- 6.** Once all of the gnocchi is cooked, put the skillet back on the heat. Add your gnocchi and allow it all to heat up together. Gently stir so the pasta gets covered in the sage butter. Serve with a fresh sage for garnish.

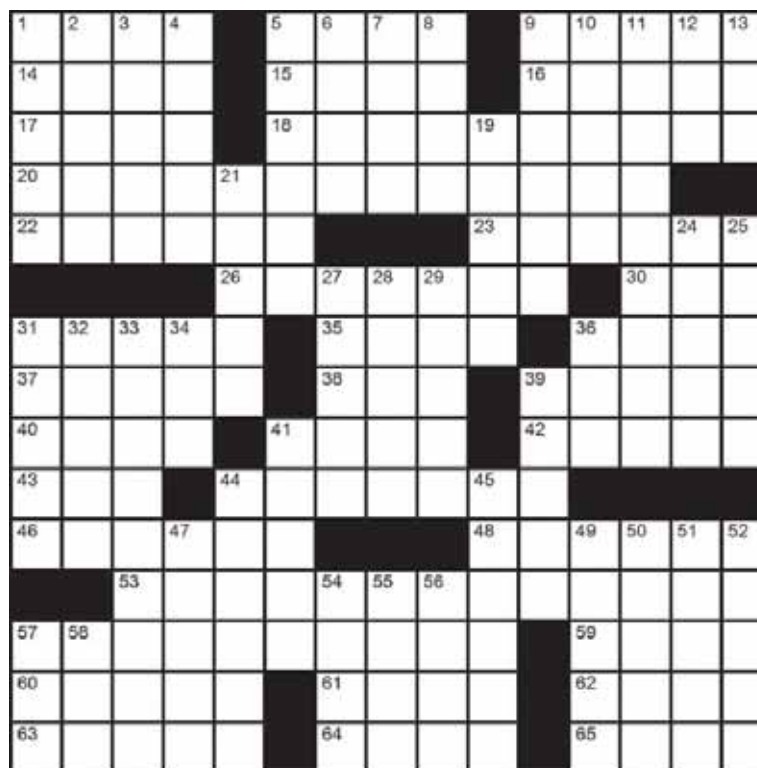
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5. Mail
9. Record label
14. Director Mr. Petri
15. Entreaty
16. Sir Newton
17. Composer Mr. Schiffrin
18. Crown Royal Northern __ (Canadian drink which is the 2016 World Whisky of the Year winner as chosen by whisky-expert-from-Britain Jim Murray)
20. Vancouver-born singer/songwriter, lead singer of Chilliwick: 2 wds.
22. Three sharps music key: letter + word
23. Meal
26. Whistlers in kitchens
30. French 'tea'
31. Stockpile
35. Tilled
36. "Buenos __!"
37. Metal mixture
38. Decide
39. Make a funny noise when laughing
40. Scratch
41. Math course, for short
42. Canadian actor Dean McDermott's mother-in-law
43. Olde-style word
44. Bitterness
46. Shoe part
48. Rent your apart-



- ment out
53. Tossed workout items: 2 wds.
57. __ Milk (Product by #11-Down)
59. Lioness in "The Lion King" (1994)
60. French com-

- poser, Erik __ (b.1866 - d.1925)
61. Crate strip
62. Mideast ruler, variantly
63. Toboggans
64. Choir member
65. Glasgow gal

DOWN

1. Grissol product, __ Toast
2. Insurance filing
3. "You're My World": 1964 hit for __ Black
4. Actor/rap-

- per, LL __
5. Globe
6. Exuberance
7. Dweeb
8. Canadian comic actor Mr. Foley
9. Slangy insults
10. Impede, in law

11. As per #57-Across...
Food brand with a flowery name and logo
12. Islet
13. Champion
19. Boo-boooed
21. Overly sentimental
24. The __ (Tallest building in London in England)
25. Irritable
27. Rose's ouch-inducer
28. Subject
29. Avril Lavigne's 2002 debut album: 2 wds.
31. Mojave plants
32. "___ the Family"
33. Fellow student
34. By what method?
36. Genetic stuff
39. Exfoliating __ (Skincare product)
41. South American animal
44. Changes
45. "Man I ___ Be" by k-os
47. Lukewarm
49. Vapid
50. Andes animal
51. Island near the Statue of Liberty
52. Sovereign sorts
54. House, in Havana
55. "___ be okay." (There, there)
56. Clean-cut
57. Cousin of -enne
58. Ms. Bertinelli, to pals

★ IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
You will be taken by surprise no matter how prepared you are today. Changes on the work front may be unsettling but if you stay calm and use your head you can easily change them to your advantage.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
You have a lot of new responsibilities and are wondering if you are doing too much. Things will get on top of you today to such an extent you'll be forced to cut back on commitments.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
It is too late to back out of something you thought would be easy — you must go through with it. Strive to make a good job of it and, next time, don't volunteer so eagerly.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
The Sun is at odds with Uranus, planet of changes, and it will shock you out of your complacency. You've coasted along long enough — now you must live up to your potential.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Try not to attach too much importance to minor setbacks. Deal with problems as they arise and don't take anything too seriously. Your attitude to what happens is most important.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Something will force you to change your plans but you don't have to abandon them altogether. The route you were planning to take may be blocked but there are other ways to reach your destination. Be flexible.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You won't get your way today, especially on the home front. You are advised to let partners and loved ones call the shots just this once.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Forces over which you have no control will upset your plans but the long-term forecast is still good. You may even be pleased that you were compelled to change direction. Everything happens for a reason.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Try not to fall out with a friend today because it may be a long time before you get the chance to make up again. What they do may be annoying but you will only make matters worse if you make a big deal of it.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Like it or not you will have to admit that no matter how much you might want to fit into a certain environment it was never meant to be. Today's Sun-Uranus link indicates it is time to bring to an end something.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Be true to your principles and do the right thing. Your reputation will surely head south if you cut corners or try to get round the rules. There is much more than money at stake.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
You'll find lots to occupy your mind today, if you enjoy a challenge. But if you're the type who gets upset when nothing goes right you might want to stay in bed a few hours longer!

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9



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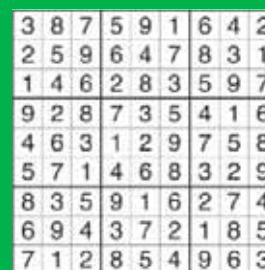
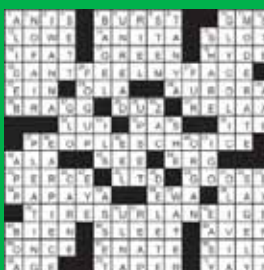
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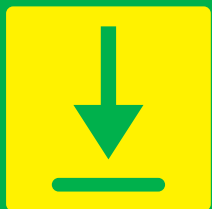


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